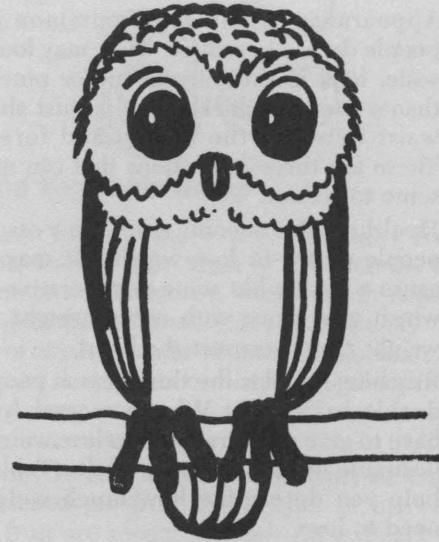


FACT SHEET

L-1453

BE WISE — CONTROL YOUR WEIGHT

Mary K. Sweeten*



Overweight or obesity is one of the most pressing health problems today. A person who is 20 percent over his desirable weight is obese. Between 15 and 40 percent of the adult population is obese. Many people accept a gradual weight gain, thus ignoring the health risks associated with overweight. This is especially true of those over 40 years of age. About 40 percent of the aging population is overweight.

Risk of Overweight

Obesity causes complications such as increased risks of illness and death. The condition may contribute to high blood pressure, stroke, heart disease, kidney disease, gall stones, cirrhosis of the liver, and diabetes. An excessive weight gain can also lead to difficulties with the feet and skeleton, shortness of breath after exercise, and increased surgical risk.

Why People Are Overweight

There are many reasons why people are overweight. People may not realize that they are overeating. They form an eating pattern when they are young and active. Out of habit, food intake remains the same and the energy used decreases, thus resulting in weight gain. Eating one ounce of chocolate or a cola each day for three weeks provides enough calories or energy to form one pound of fat.

*Extension foods and nutrition specialist, The Texas A&M University System.

Social eating in the United States is one downfall. Many social functions are planned around food.

Inactivity or incorrect balance of calories consumed and energy expended can cause overweight. Some Americans watch spectator sports on television instead of actively engaging in sports such as golf or jogging. Sedentary activities done while sitting require little or no arm movement resulting in only burning 80 to 100 calories per hour; light activities while standing requiring arm movement burn 110 to 160 calories per hour; moderate activities while standing with vigorous arm movement burn 170 to 240 calories; and strenuous activities such as active sports burn 350 or more calories.

Boredom causes people to overeat. Many people eat when they are lonely so that they will feel better. Taking an interest in activities, gardening, career, or hobbies can prevent boredom.

Heredity may make some people overweight. However, research on identical twins reared in different environments show that life styles have more effect on weight gain than do inherited tendencies. Few people are overweight due to glandular trouble.

Obesity in the United States is believed to be a result of cultural change caused by economic influences. There is an abundance of food and an increase in consumption of sugar-containing pastries and cookies. Labor saving devices on the market result in less energy expenditure for a task than in past years.

For example, consider the energy saved from using a mechanical weedeater instead of physically pulling weeds.

Reasons to Reduce

People often decide to reduce for various reasons.

- Appearance is the most common reason people decide to reduce. They may look at the scale, look in the mirror, and/or pinch more than a one-inch thickness of fat just above the waist between the thumb and forefinger. These are three indications that can motivate some to reduce.
- Health is the second common reason why people desire to lose weight. It may be because a person has some degenerative disease which goes along with excess weight. Excess weight may overexert the heart.
- Reaching a goal is the third reason people may decide to reduce. Whatever goal, you will have to give up extra foods to lose weight. The desirable weight range for adults (Table 1) can help you determine how much weight you need to lose.

TABLE 1. DESIRABLE WEIGHTS FOR ADULTS

Height (in shoes)	Small Frame		Medium Frame		Large Frame	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
4'10"		95		101		111
5'0"		100		107		117
5'2"	116	106	123	113	133	123
5'4"	122	112	129	119	140	129
5'6"	128	119	136	127	147	137
5'8"	136	127	145	135	156	146
5'10"	145	135	153	143	165	154
6'0"	153	143	162	151	174	163
6'2"	161		171		183	

How to Reduce

There are almost as many approaches to treatment of overweight as there are causes. Some rather strange methods like wiring the jaws together or bypass surgery of the intestines have gained recent publicity. The most commonly used method is diet.

The degree of success in treating obesity is fairly low. Some people experience frequent loss and gain of large amounts of weight. Many physicians and nutritionists believe that repeated gain and loss may be more harmful than constant obesity. Continue to select nutritious yet low calorie food once you have lost unwanted pounds.

Visit your doctor before you start any reducing plan. The doctor can determine how much weight

you should lose. Rapid weight loss is not desirable. The recommended amount of weight to lose each week should not be more than 2 pounds.

A reduction diet can be nutritionally adequate even at 1,200 calories. On a diet lower than 1,200 calories, it is hard to get enough minerals and vitamins. Only a doctor would know which dietary supplements were necessary for the more severely restricted weight reduction diets, and these diets should be followed only under a doctor's supervision.

It takes 3,500 extra calories to produce a pound of stored fat. For each pound of fat gained or lost, there must be either 3,500 calories more or less in the diet than the body uses. If a person wants to lose 2 pounds a week, he/she should eat 7,000 calories less each week than the body uses or 1,000 calories less each day to lose 2 pounds.

Keep track of everything you eat for meals and snacks for several days. Each meal is important. Skipping meals to cut calories leads to unplanned snacking. Unplanned snacking thus leads to eating more food.

Crash or Fad Diets

Crash or fad diets may be harmful to your health. Fad diets severely limit food choice because of the major emphasis on only one or two food combinations, thus eliminating needed nutrients. These foods may seem sure solutions to the dieter's problem, but they are not the answer. Crash diets lack so many necessary nutrients that they may make you feel uncomfortable physically and mentally. It is hard to stick to a crash or fad diet. Furthermore, it is hard to keep off the weight lost because the diet has not really involved changing food habits.

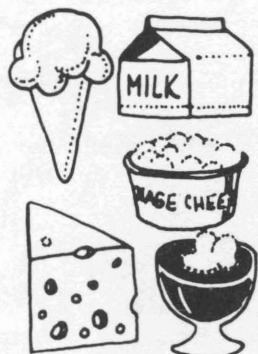
Low carbohydrate diets, such as the grapefruit diet, are very popular. Prolonged reliance on these crash diets may result in physical harm. According to a report by the American Medical Association, these diets contain large amounts of animal protein and animal fat which raise serum cholesterol levels and may be undesirable for people prone to heart disease.

Sensible Weight Reduction Plan

A balanced weight reduction diet will encourage a wide selection of foods and maintain a satisfactory balance between all nutrients — protein, fats, carbohydrates, vitamins, and minerals — even though some nutrients may be at a reduced level. The sensible weight reduction plan will be lacking only in calories.

Select lower calorie foods from each of the basic food groups daily — milk group, meat group, fruit and vegetable group, bread and cereal group, and other foods group. The diet will be about 1,200

calories. Dieters should read the nutrition information on processed foods to help them know the number of calories in foods and to make wise selections based on nutrient information as well as calories.



Milk Group

Most of your calcium is supplied from milk and milk products, along with protein, vitamin A, riboflavin and other nutrients. Select low calorie fluid or dry skim milk, buttermilk and cheese. You save 70 calories by selecting skim milk instead of whole milk.

Adults need 2 or more cups of milk daily; teenagers, 4 or more; and children, 2 or more cups.



Meat Group

Select two or more two- to three-ounce servings daily of lean beef, veal, pork, lamb, poultry, fish or eggs. One cup of dried beans, dry peas, and nuts may be used as meat substitutes occasionally. However, a serving of dry beans, dry peas, nuts or peanut butter is higher in calories than a serving of lean meat. Two ounces of lean meat provide 150 calories whereas 1 cup of cooked dried beans provides 220 calories and 4 tablespoons of peanut butter supplies 380 calories.

Save calories by either broiling, roasting, baking or boiling meat group foods. Frying foods adds unwanted calories. Rich sauces and gravies also should be omitted.

Meat, poultry, fish, eggs and meat alternates are valued for their protein, iron, thiamin, riboflavin and niacin.



Fruit and Vegetable Group

Serve four or more servings daily from the vegetable-fruit group. Most of the vitamin C and a large amount of vitamin A furnished by foods come from vegetables and fruit. Eat a variety daily. Eat one serving of citrus or some other fruit valued for vitamin C daily and dark-green or deep-yellow vegetables for vitamin A every other day. One-half cup of vegetables equals one serving.

Count $\frac{1}{2}$ cup unsweetened fruit as a serving. Unsweetened pie fruit, fresh fruit, or unsweetened canned fruit are recommended. An ordinary portion of some fresh fruits would be 1 medium-sized apple, 1 small or $\frac{1}{2}$ of large banana, 1 medium orange, $\frac{1}{2}$ grapefruit, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup strawberries, or $\frac{1}{2}$ cantaloupe. Dried fruits contain higher concentration of sugar, for example one serving would be 2 prunes.

Eat these fruits and vegetables plain without added fat or sugar to save calories. Omit rich sauces and gravies from cooked vegetables. Try flavoring cooked vegetables with one bouillon cube, vinegar, lemon juice, various herbs and spices. Add a tangy low calorie dressing, lemon or vinegar to flavor your favorite salad.



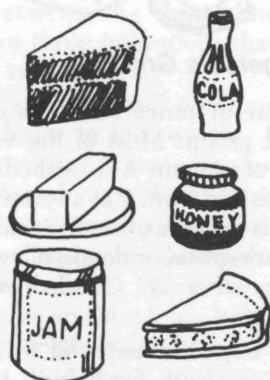
Bread and Cereal Group

Protein, iron, B vitamins and carbohydrates are found in the bread and cereal group. Select at least four servings of whole grain, enriched, and restored

products without added sugar coatings. These products are more nutritious with no higher calories than less nutritious unenriched cereal products. Check the nutrition information on the food label to be sure.

A serving would be one slice of bread; one ounce of unsweetened dry cereal; or ½ cup cooked cereal, rice, grits, noodles, or spaghetti.

For calorie counters, be careful not to add extra butter, jellies, jams or sugar icings. This is what adds extra calories fast.



Other Foods

Limit the number of servings to three or four servings each day of the other group. These fat and sugar containing foods used sparingly can help to round out meals and maintain desirable weight.

Use ½ tablespoon of margarine or butter daily or another fat such as 2 level teaspoons of light cream, 1

tablespoon of salad dressing, or 1 tablespoon of cream cheese. A serving of these fat containing foods contain about 45 calories each.

Avoid colas, rich pastries and desserts and other concentrated sweets such as jellies, jams and candies. Occasionally you can splurge and eat these higher-calorie favorite desserts in small quantities. Save calories on other meals so you can afford to splurge for important occasions.

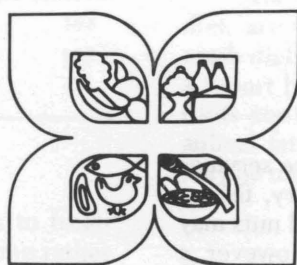
Remember you are the only one who can decide if being overweight means more to you than your health and appearance.

To control your weight:

- Check with your doctor
- Lose weight slowly
- Make a permanent change in your eating patterns and eat foods from the basic food groups daily
- Increase activities while reducing number of calories

References

1. "The Healthy Way to Weigh Less," American Medical Association Pamphlet OP-322, 535 N. Dearborn Street, Chicago, Illinois 60610, 1973.
2. "Calories and Weight," Agriculture Information Bulletin No. 364, June 1974.
3. "Food and Your Weight," H and GB No. 74, 1973.



Acknowledgment

The author gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Sally Coble, Marilyn Haggard, and Frances Reasonover, Extension foods and nutrition specialists, The Texas A&M University System, in the preparation of this publication.

Educational programs conducted by the Texas Agricultural Extension Service serve people of all ages regardless of socio-economic levels, race, color, sex, religion or national origin.

Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics, The Texas A&M University System and the United States Department of Agriculture cooperating. Distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8, 1914, as amended, and June 30, 1914.